

File Code: 1950
Date: October 21, 2011

Dear Concerned Citizen,

As Acting District Ranger for the Dolores Ranger District, I am pleased to present to you this revised pre-decisional *Boggy-Glade Travel Management Environmental Assessment (EA)*. Before starting in my current capacity in Dolores, I had the opportunity to be involved with this plan in my position as Planning and Recreation Staff Officer for the San Juan National Forest. I was able to review the many valuable comments and suggestions we received on the version of the EA released this summer and hope this new version of the EA is responsive to those comments and offers a workable transportation system for the Boggy-Glade landscape. This revised EA includes a new Preferred Alternative (Alternative D) as well as information regarding social and economic impacts to communities, a review of county land use plans, and revised road density mileages in a proposed Forest Plan Amendment.

The Forest Service is dedicated to providing members of our community the opportunity to get involved in this process and provide information and suggestions; therefore, the Dolores Ranger District is providing a 30-day public comment period for this revised EA. The Preferred Alternative is briefly described below; however, comments are welcome on all alternatives. Information on how to provide input and a map of Alternative D are also provided.

ALTERNATIVE D – Preferred Alternative

Changes in the new Preferred Alternative include:

Limited off-road use of ATVs for game retrieval during deer and elk fall hunting seasons. Off-road motorized game retrieval using an ATV (<50" width) would be allowed one mile off of designated open routes in areas where cross-country travel was previously allowed. Hunters would be required to choose the least ground-disturbing route and to carry a validated tag to indicate they are retrieving game. Hunters would not be allowed to use ATVs to travel cross-country to scout or for purposes other than strictly retrieving game. Off-road use of ATVs for game retrieval would be allowed only during deer and elk archery, muzzleloader and 1st through 4th rifle seasons (approximately mid-August to mid-November).

Partnerships to ensure success of new game-retrieval policy. Montezuma and Dolores Counties would work with the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife to assist the Forest Service with monitoring of compliance and hunter education in the field. Continuation of the new game retrieval policy will be based in part on receiving assistance from the Counties with this additional workload of education and enforcement.

More miles of open motorized routes than the previous Preferred Alternative, including 20 new open miles to offer loops on un-graveled roads, provide more dispersed camping spurs and increase motorized accessibility in the Thomas Mountain, Black Snag and Carlyle Point areas. All open roads, except the Dolores Norwood Road, would be open to use by ATVs and UTV vehicles. 68 miles of motorized trails would be open to vehicles 50-inches or less in width (ATVs). The total mileage of open motorized roads in the new Preferred Alternative is **379 miles**.

A Forest Plan Amendment would allow for greater road density in the Boggy-Glade area. Road density guidelines in the Forest Plan would be changed from 1.0 to 1.2 miles per square mile.



Day-use parking allowed up to 30 feet off selected roads with high traffic and dust. Visitors would be allowed to park vehicles up to 30 feet off of either side of the Dolores-Norwood Road and Forest Road 514. The allowance for day-use parking on other forest roads would remain at one car length off the side of the road.

Methods of road closure with less ground disturbance (such as installing boulders to block entry) would be considered, when appropriate, for decommissioning roadbeds prior to use of high-impact measures (such as constructing large berms or ripping long distances of the surface).

Clarification of how the plan relates to administrative, permitted and emergency uses. Federal, state, tribal or local government offices in the performance of official duties could be allowed to drive cross-country or on undesignated routes. This would include emergency wildfire suppression and search and rescue activities.

Adjustment of the location of Glade OHV Trail to avoid conflicts with livestock operations and sensitive riparian habitat near Glade Creek.

Seasonal motorized restrictions to protect winter wildlife habitat in the McPhee Reservoir and Glade Mountain areas from December 1st through May 1st.

HOW TO PROVIDE INPUT

The EA for the Buggy-Glade Travel Management Plan is available upon request at the Dolores Public Lands Office, 29211 Hwy 184, Dolores, Colorado, 81323 or by calling 970-882-7296. Large scale maps of the project area and alternatives are also available for viewing. The EA is also available at the San Juan National Forest website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/sanjuan> (click on *Dolores Roads and Trails* in the right hand corner) and at the Dolores and Cortez Public Libraries.

Written, facsimile, hand-delivered, oral, and electronic comments concerning this action will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of the legal notice in the *Durango Herald*. All comments received during this comment period and the two previous comment periods (May 2010 and June 2011) will be accepted, considered and have standing to appeal.

Written comments must be submitted to: Mark Lambert, Acting District Ranger at the Dolores Public Lands Office (address above). The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered comments are 8 am – 4:30 pm, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Comments may also be faxed to Attn: Mark Lambert at 970-882-6841. Oral comments may be provided at the Dolores Public Lands office during normal business hours via telephone or in person. Please inform the front desk staff you wish to provide oral comments.

Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), and Word (.doc) to comments-rocky-mountain-san-juan-mancos-dolores@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required for appeal eligibility. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification. For electronically mailed comments the sender should normally receive an automated acknowledgement from the agency as a confirmation of receipt. If the sender does not receive an automated acknowledgement receipt of comments, it is the sender's responsibility to insure timely receipt by other means.

Thank you again for your continued participation in the management of your public lands. I look forward to hearing from you during this final public comment period.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark Lambert

Mark Lambert

Acting District Ranger

